



David Clarke

Borstal Boys

From Crime To Christ

A Short Play

BORSTAL BOYS

A Short Play – Prelude to the Punk Rock Opera

Stage Script for Performance

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INTRODUCTION:

This short play is based on the true story of two brothers growing up in rural England during the early 1960s. As the shadow of post-war Britain looms large over working-class families, we meet David and Mick Clarke—brothers on the brink of very different paths. What begins as a seemingly ordinary domestic scene soon descends into confrontation, arrest, and incarceration. Through moments of humour, defiance, and painful truth, “Borstal Boys” explores the formative experiences that shaped two lives, setting the stage for the explosive punk rock opera that follows.

The story invites us into a time of youth rebellion, village gossip, and the stark justice of the British legal system. Told through the eyes of those who lived it, this work speaks to the systems that fail young men, and the bonds of family that endure in spite of them.

CAST:

DAVID CLARKE – Narrator and younger brother

MICK CLARKE – Teenage brother, rebellious and impulsive

MUM – Traditional, no-nonsense working-class mother

POLICE OFFICER – Uniformed officer

MAGISTRATE – Stern figure of the court

SETTING:

The Clarke family home in the village of Wilstone, early 1960s. Locations include the kitchen, a field, and the courtroom.

ACT I

(Lights up. Spotlight on DAVID, front stage. Sound of punk music under voice. He speaks over the fading tune.)

DAVID

You give us back to the law.
The law we belonged to.
And we did belong there—once.

There we are, Mick. Listening to that tune... takes me right back. We weren't the only ones the police ever pulled in.
Do you remember when you first got arrested?

MICK

Yeah. And it was your fault.

DAVID

Mine?

MICK

Back in Wilstone. I was about to leave school. That was thirty years ago.

DAVID

Can't blame me for that!

MICK

1963. You do remember, don't you?

(Music rises. Lights fade to flashback. Scene shifts to domestic interior – the Clarke home kitchen.)

ACT II – Flashback: 1963

(MICK enters, face bruised and bloody. DAVID is already in the room.)

DAVID

Blimey, Mick! Looks like you went three rounds with Floyd Patterson.

MICK

Bastards must've broken my nose. Marsworth lads.

DAVID

Three of them?

MICK

Yeah. But I sorted it. Bit of persuasion. They won't be back.

DAVID

What did you do?

MICK

Later. When Mum's not here.

(MUM enters, brisk and sharp.)

MUM

What's this? What've you done to your face?

MICK

Bit of an accident.

MUM

Let me see.

(Inspects his face.)

MUM

You've been fighting again, haven't you?

MICK

No, I slipped. Hit my face on the handlebars.

MUM

Go wash up. I'll take a proper look later.

(MICK exits briefly. MUM turns to DAVID.)

MUM

Next time Mrs Bishop comes to the shop, don't let her in.

DAVID

Why not?

MUM

She's been stealing cigarettes. Comes when she knows I'm not there. Tell her we're shut.

Village folk notice everything. This isn't Watford.

(MICK returns, cleaner.)

MUM

That's better.

Now your dad says you've got a job lined up?

MICK

Midwinters. Trainee carpenter. And I'm getting a motorbike when I'm sixteen.

DAVID

What kind?

MICK

250 BSA. Telescopic forks. From Bob Sher's place.

MUM

I've heard about those boys. Trouble.

MICK

They're bored. Same as us.

MUM

What's that you're reading?

DAVID

Christine Keeler and John Profumo. Lied to Parliament.

MUM

If he were my son, I'd clip him round the ear.

DAVID

Same as you do us?

MUM

Damn right!

(Knock at the door. POLICE OFFICER enters.)

POLICE OFFICER

Good afternoon. I need to speak with Michael Clarke.

MUM

He's done nothing wrong!

POLICE OFFICER

It's serious. May I come in?

(He enters. MICK steps forward.)

POLICE OFFICER

We've had a report that you assaulted a boy from Marsworth. Two witnesses saw

it.

MICK

They stole our moped. I went to get it back. Had a bit of metal in my hand.

POLICE OFFICER

Show me.

(MICK hands over a small, padded metal part.)

POLICE OFFICER

Fits the hand. Cushioned. Looks like a knuckle-duster.

MUM

He made that in school! For the moped saddle!

POLICE OFFICER

Still a serious offence.

(Scene shifts. Courtroom. MAGISTRATE enters behind a bench.)

ACT III – Courtroom

MAGISTRATE

Michael Clarke, you have been found guilty of making an offensive weapon and causing grievous bodily harm.

I sentence you to three months in Her Majesty's Detention Centre.

This place is designed to deliver a short, sharp shock... for boys like you.

(Sound of gavel. Punk music blares. Lights drop. Curtain.)

[END OF PLAY]